

1. **Describe the practice proposed for recognition, and list its objectives. Detail how the practice is innovative, how it promotes high student achievement and how it can be replicated.**

**“The Hollywood Kids” is a club for elementary students with learning disabilities who write and then star in their own movies.** The club has expanded over the last five years from eight to twenty-two students from self-contained and resource rooms from each of the three elementary schools in the district. The “Kids” meet after school hours. It takes approximately one month to write the storyboards, and two to three months to film and edit the final product.

**The “Hollywood Kids” is a very innovative idea that *can* be replicated by others.** Any teacher could easily write and film a movie with his or her students. The “Kids” started as an in-class project as a way to teach conflict resolution using a hands on approach. My students wrote the plot on teacher made storyboards during their language arts period. We filmed during the last hour of school for about two weeks. Two movies were filmed during school hours. Because of an increase of student interest we filmed three additional movies after school.

**The “Hollywood Kids” main objective is to write a movie plot and then act out the scenes on camera.** Many students with learning disabilities are extremely creative. They are often unable to express their ideas due to frustration over writing or speaking. Through the “Hollywood Kids”, students have an opportunity to express themselves in a non-threatening environment. The “Kids” brainstorm ideas and gain strength and confidence from each other. This newfound confidence is recognized in their improved class work.

**Another objective for the “Hollywood Kids” is that the students will show respect and cooperation during the entire movie making process.** Teamwork is essential to a successful movie! Each student signs a “contract” in order to be a member of the club. The contract lists rules regarding behavior and respect. It also states that the students are expected to keep up with their schoolwork and avoid behaviors that could cause suspension or detention. An example of the benefits is that a parent once informed me that their child was starting to get behind in homework. After I spoke with the student and reminded him of his signed contract, he quickly caught up with his work..

**In addition, “Hollywood Kids” often have an opportunity to practice goals set forth for them in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs).** A few examples of these would be goals related to speech, memory, and others involving sequential order and understanding. This is a fantastic way to help the students meet some of their IEP goals in a functionally relevant manner.

**The students learn much more than movie making from being a member of the “Hollywood Kids”.** They learn that they are *indeed* smart and creative. The “Kids” show a level of respect and cooperation that can be easily seen by any visitor to the “set”. In addition, *many* of the parents share stories of witnessing their children emitting a greater sense of self-esteem and confidence. Their children express a greater interest in attending school and in making movies of their own. The parents are happy to tell me that the “Hollywood Kids” have made a real impact on their child’s life.

2. **Describe the educational needs of students that the practice addresses and how they were identified. List the *Core Curriculum Content and Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards*\* addressed by the practice and describe how the practice addresses the standard(s).**

The students who participate in the “Hollywood Kids” are students already identified as have a learning disability or an emotional disability. They generally have difficulty with written and verbal expression. Many of the children also have poor perceptions of themselves that greatly affect their lives in and out of school.

The “Kids” address many of those needs in a non-threatening and exciting environment. In addition, the students’ exposure to real film techniques assists them in distinguishing fact from reality when watching today’s movies. Many of the students have shared with me that they look at television and movies from a different perspective now that they have starred in a movie themselves.

The Core Curriculum Standards addressed the Visual and Performing Arts through the “Hollywood Kids” are:

- I.      **1.1 All students will acquire aesthetic awareness of theater and visual arts.**
- II.     **1.2 All students will refine perceptual, intellectual, physical, and technical skills through creating theater (acting) and visual arts.**
- III.    **1.3 All students will utilize arts elements and arts media to produce artistic products and performances.**
- IV.    **1.4 All students will demonstrate knowledge of the process of critique.**

*Through the creation of the movie, the students learn basic technical terms and techniques that are used in the industry. They perform their story in front of the camera and learn how to show different expressions using facial expressions, vocal expressions, and body language. The students watch “dailies” (video shot that day) and critique their work. Several students have learned how to use the video camera and more will be trained each year.*

The core Curriculum Standards addressed in Language Arts Literacy through the “Hollywood Kids” are:

- I.      **3.1 All students will speak for a variety of real purposes and audiences.**
- II.     **3.3 All students will write in clear, concise, organized language that varies in content and form for different audiences and purposes.**
- III.    **3.5 All students view, understand, and use visual information.**

*The students write collaboratively and use a variety of strategies to develop the story line for the movie. They utilize a storyboard format for writing the basic plot information, and elaborate with pictures or symbols. Students also learn how to better express their feelings and ideas to others as the students are interviewed by reporters and others about the “Hollywood Kid” movies.*

**3. Document the assessment measures used to determine the extent to which the objective of the practices have been met.**

Individual evaluation and assessment of the goals met or practiced during a “Hollywood Kids” production occur at regular intervals. Teacher observation and informal interviews with the “Kids” and their parents occur frequently. Storyboards utilized as a tool for filming and can easily show understanding of the pre-production process.

When gauging the success of the objective regarding respect and cooperation, the “contract” is used. If the student is not one of my own, I count on other teachers or parents to inform me of any academic or behavioral problems that arise. If a student receives a suspension or a detention, a conference held with the student devises a plan to discourage repeat behavior. Should a student get behind in work, a plan is written to improve work habits. If the intervention is unsuccessful, then the student is asked to resign from the club and try again next year. In addition, regular attendance is mandatory, therefore an attendance sheet is used. Absent students understand the responsibility to call me at school to inform me as soon as possible. If this is not done, a follow up call is given.

The final version of the movie is presented to the parents and family members at a Grand Premiere Night. The success of the project is only partially seen by viewing the movie on the television screen. The true measure of success comes from watching the students as they watch themselves on the screen. They begin to share their experiences of making the film with those around them. The joy and pride is clearly visible. Beyond that, the result of their work is on display for all to see.